

July 22, 2015 SE Home Fuelwood 2015 Forest Management Project

Public Meeting Comments and Responses

1. Will you be working with the Conservation Commission in identifying vernal pools and priority habitat? I reviewed the certified vernal pools, potential vernal pools, and priority habitat for rare species from MassGIS. No certified or potential vernal pools are within 100 feet of the project and the project is not within priority habitat. If the Conservation Commission has any additional information, please pass it along. Once a cutting plan is filed, the Conservation Commission will be able to make formal comments as well.
2. What are the safety concerns? Do you require any cutting certification from the participating homeowners? Participants cut at their own risk.
3. What do participants do? Do they cut the wood up on site? Yes, participants drive up to their respective lots, cut the tree up into pieces and carry those pieces back their vehicle.
4. How much are participants allowed to cut? The maximum amount is 4 cords per household. We typically offer lots ranging from 1 cord up to 4 cords of wood.
5. Are all the trees to be cut hardwoods? Yes.
6. Participants are going to leave the tops of trees on site, what about the small branches? Tree tops and small branches will be left onsite. Participants will be given guidelines to follow on how the tree tops and branches need to be left. We do require no woody material near the forest roads. Back from the roads, woody material will need to be cut to less than 2 above the ground.
7. I am concerned about adding fuel to the forest floor and the possibility of fire. The sale will lessen the amount of fuel overall within the project area. The small woody material left behind will decompose quickly do to its small size. As mentioned, participants will have to remove any cut material near the forest road. Also, we have fire equipment based at the state forest headquarters.
8. I would like to provide comments on vernal pools that are not certified. Please provide comments to timber.comments@state.ma.us
9. What is the time frame for the project? I want to make sure this isn't being proposed for the summer. The next step after the public comment period will be to write a silvicultural prescription that will go into detail about the specifics of the project. We will then have a pre-harvest walk, later in the year. We plan on having the project occur this fall.
10. Another thing unique about this area are the watering holes. How are you going to protect them? We will keep marked trees greater than a tree length away from the CCC watering holes.
11. Are participants evaluated at all? Participants do get rated on how well they are compiling with the contract. For example: is the slash low, are the stumps cut low, any trash, etc. If participants get a poor rating, they would not be able to participate in any further home fuelwood projects.